

Teaching and Learning Policy

2025-26



ST. JAMES THE LESS



www.stjamesthelesschool.co.uk

Vision and Ethos

At St James the Less, our mission is to nurture every child's God-given potential through high-quality teaching and learning rooted in Gospel values. Inspired by Ron Berger's Ethic of Excellence, we believe all pupils can produce high quality work through effort, critique, and revision. We aim for excellence, inclusion, and joy in learning.

Purpose

This policy sets out our approach to teaching and learning, ensuring consistency, high expectations, and continuous improvement. It underpins our curriculum intent and reflects our Catholic ethos.

Our Principles for High Quality Inclusive Teaching

- **Learning Defined:** Knowing more and remembering more of the curriculum; developing skills, understanding, and behaviours for life.
- **High Expectations:** Every child is challenged and supported to achieve their best.
- **Inclusive Practice:** Adaptive teaching ensures access for all, including SEND and disadvantaged.

Through our use of *Teaching Walkthrus* for professional development, we embed the following teaching and learning principles within our curriculum delivery and structure:

Behaviour and Relationships	
1. Establish Your Expectations	Pg 38
2. Signal, Pause, Insist	Pg 40
3. Positive Relationships	Pg 36
4. Positive Framing	Pg 42
Explaining and Modelling	
5. Live Modelling	Pg 78
6. Modelling Handover: I Do, We Do, You Do	V3 Pg 100
7. Deliberate Vocabulary Development	Pg 72
8. Whole Class Reading Routines	V2 Pg 78
9. Scaffolding	Pg 80
10. Head On Misconceptions	Pg 86
Questioning and Feedback	
11. Cold Calling	Pg 90
12. Think, Pair, Share	Pg 92
13. Show-Me Boards	Pg 94
14. Check for Understanding	Pg 96
15. Say it Again Better	Pg 98
16. Probing Questions	Pg 100
17. Feedback that Moves Forward	Pg 104
Practice and Retrieval	
18. Rehearsal and Performance	Pg 118
19. Guided Practice	Pg 126
20. Independent Practice	Pg 128

21. Quizzing	Pg 112
22. Using a Knowledge Organiser	Pg 116

Pedagogical Approach

At St James the Less RC Primary, we apply the following pedagogy to our curriculum design and implementation:

- Based on **Rosenshine's Principles** and **Cognitive Load Theory**:
 - CONNECT - EXPLAIN - EXAMPLE - ATTEMPT - APPLY - CHALLENGE.

Connect	Explain	Example	Attempt	Apply	Challenge
 Activate prior learning A spark - engage pupils with the concept	 Instruct vocabulary Explain core concepts - model text	 High-quality modelling Explicit direct instruction (My turn)	 Guided practice Gradually reduce scaffold (Our turn)	 Independent practice Application of new concept (Your turn)	 Deepen understanding Sophisticate thinking

- Based on **Ron Berger's Ethic of Excellence**:
 - Multiple drafts, critique, making work public, celebrating success.



Adaptive Teaching

Our aim is that every child has the opportunity to master age-appropriate learning, regardless of ability. Teachers continuously assess pupils' strengths and needs and adapt their teaching accordingly. Rather than accelerating through content, we prioritise depth of understanding for all learners, ensuring sufficient time is allocated for pupils to build strong foundations.

Teachers plan carefully considered tasks that allow flexibility and success for all. Different levels of support are provided, and the pace of instruction is adapted to meet individual needs. Where knowledge and skills are mastered, pupils are challenged to think deeply and solve problems.

To support all learners:

- Tasks are scaffolded in a variety of ways including: the use of sentence stems, missing word sentences, word banks, concrete and pictorial resources, technology, dual coding, oral rehearsal, and deliberate vocabulary development.

Inclusion - Disadvantaged and SEND

We want every child to fully access their education. Our ethos and learning environment are person-centered, placing the views and needs of each child at the heart of our practice. All lessons are adapted through strategies or tasks to meet individual needs and provide appropriate challenges, so that every pupil can make progress at their own rate.

We maintain a strong focus on high aspirations and improving outcomes for pupils who are disadvantaged or SEND, enabling them to succeed and thrive. Our approach is proactive:

- Full access to all manageable aspects of the school curriculum.
- Scaffolds to remove barriers to learning.
- Collaboration with families and external agencies as needed.

At St James the Less, inclusion is embedded in everything we do. Every child is valued, supported, and encouraged to achieve their God-given potential.

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment is continuous, purposeful, and proportionate, supporting learning without generating unnecessary workload, while enabling teachers to foster high expectations and independence.

- **Formative Assessment:**
 - Drives planning and informs next steps in teaching.
 - Teachers use questioning, retrieval practice, and observation to check understanding throughout lessons.
- **Marking and Feedback (see Marking and Feedback Policy for full details):**
 - Feedback is timely, constructive, and focused on improvement.
 - Next-step marking is used to guide pupils towards deeper understanding.
 - Teachers provide clear explanations of errors and model correct approaches.
- **Peer and Self-Assessment:**

- Pupils are taught to critique their own and others' work respectfully, linking to our **Ethic of Excellence**.
- Opportunities for reflection and improvement are embedded in lessons.
- **Summative Assessment:**
 - Used to measure progress against curriculum objectives and identify gaps.
 - Data informs interventions and adaptive teaching strategies.

Professional Development

- Our CPD is guided by *Teaching Walkthrus*, focusing on incremental improvement using the above Teaching and Learning Principles and Pedagogical Approach.
- Peer coaching and collaborative learning are integral to staff development.
- External CPD provided to further develop practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Teachers:** Plan and deliver high-quality lessons; adapt for all learners; ensure consistency with the Teaching and Learning Principles and Curriculum Pedagogy outlined above.
- **Leaders:** Monitor standards: observations, drop-ins, work scrutiny, pupil voice, and pupil progress discussions, to support professional growth and ensure high quality inclusive teaching for all pupils.
- **Pupils:** Engage actively in all lessons and strive for excellence.
- **Parents:** Support learning at home and school partnerships.

Policy to be reviewed annually.

Date of next review - Autumn 2026